

INCREASE OF PENSIONS FOR TOTAL BLINDNESS.

MARCH 1, 1904.—Ordered to be printed.

Mr. McCUMBER, from the Committee on Pensions, submitted the following

REPORT.

[To accompany S. 671.]

The Committee on Pensions, to whom was referred the bill (S. 671) to increase the pensions of those who have lost both eyes or have become totally blind from causes occurring in the military or naval service of the United States, beg leave to submit the following report:

By letter from the Commissioner of Pensions, dated February 24, 1904, addressed to the chairman of this committee, it is stated that there are 600 pensioners for total blindness; that the cost of increasing their rate from \$72 to \$100 would be \$336 per year each, amounting to \$201,600. The deplorable condition in which the man finds himself who is totally blind requires no comment by this committee, and when it is considered that this condition is due to causes occurring in his service of the United States there is nothing left for the Government to do but to compensate him reasonably for the great hardship he is compelled to endure, which is the sole purpose of this bill. In an act of Congress approved March 2, 1903, it is provided that all persons who in the line of duty shall have lost both feet shall receive a pension at the rate of \$100 per month. Your committee quotes from this act as an ample justification for the passage of this bill, firmly believing that a soldier who has lost both of his eyes in the service is suffering as great if not a greater hardship than the soldier who has lost both feet.

Upon the foregoing your committee heartily recommend the passage of this bill.